A Developmental Services Bulletin from the Ministry of Community and Social Services

Community Networks of Specialized Care

Community Networks of Specialized Care are getting great results for people with a developmental disability — and the agencies that serve them.
In this issue of Spotlight, we're highlighting their progress and achievements.

People who have a developmental disability combined with a mental illness or behavioural challenge need extra support to participate in the community. They rely on specialized services to enjoy a meaningful quality of life.

So, in 2005, we announced that four Community Networks of Specialized Care would coordinate specialized services for people with a developmental disability who need extra care. These networks help people with a developmental disability get specialized care for eating disorders, mental illness or challenging behaviours.

Right now, the following agencies lead Ontario's four Community Networks of Specialized Care:

- Southern Ontario network: Bethesda and Regional Support Associates
- Central Ontario network: Surrey Place Centre (Toronto), Community Living Huronia (Pineview site), and Guelph's Trellis Mental Health and Developmental Services (formerly Community Mental Health Clinic)
- Eastern Ontario: Ongwanada and Prescott-Russell Services for Children and Adults
- Northern Ontario network: Algonquin Child and Family Services

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What are specialized services?

Specialized services are for people who have a dual diagnosis — a developmental disability combined with a mental illness or challenging behaviour. These services include day treatment, crisis response, in-patient hospital treatment, case management, community-based clinical services and specialized residential accommodation. Services are provided by qualified agencies and health professionals and are designed to treat a person's physical, mental and social health.

What are Community Networks of Specialized Care?

These networks do not provide direct care. Instead, they bring the agencies that provide specialized care together. When developmental service and mental health agencies work together, they learn about a person's total physical, mental and social condition. This way, people receive coordinated care that is tailored to their needs.

What does a Community Network of Specialized Care do?

Community Networks of Specialized Care have three key roles: coordinating services, improving service delivery, and education.

1. Coordinate the specialized services system

- Make it easier for people to reach all services
- Break down barriers between the developmental services specialized system and mental health service systems
- Strengthen partnerships with mental health providers — like the Ministry of Health's Assertive Community Treatment Teams — to manage limited resources and improve case resolution for people with the highest needs
- Develop fair rules for priority treatment.

2. Improve service delivery

- Increase services offered by specialized and developmental service providers
- Develop a broader range of services, including more clinical services for Francophone, Aboriginal and remote communities.

3. Educate and train

- Build relationships with the academic and research community
- Create professional development opportunities
- Train general health and social service practitioners
- Develop plans to recruit and retain specialized professionals.

Transforming Developmental Services through Technology

One way networks coordinate services and bring agencies together is through videoconferencing. Agencies and professionals use videoconferencing to coordinate services, deliver treatment, and provide training — without having to travel.

Each network has videoconferencing sites at agencies across their region. Videoconferencing connects the region's agencies and professionals, and it links all four provincial networks. Agencies and professionals also use videoconferencing to connect to agencies across Canada and the world. There are 74 videoconferencing sites across Ontario.

Rural and remote areas are really benefiting from this technology. Videoconferencing gives agencies access to specialized clinical resources for training. It also saves hours of travel time for people with a developmental disability, their caregivers and families. People are now getting specialized services in areas where none had been available.

Videoconferencing also strengthens connections across the developmental services sector. Agencies and professionals from different sectors are taking part in mental health training and workshops held by videoconference across the province. Local professionals and psychiatrists can also participate in important case meetings via videoconference.

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How we're doing: Report on Community Networks of Specialized Care

A transformed developmental services system is accountable. Here's a report on what's happening in Community Networks of Specialized Care.

Coordinating the Specialized Services System

Networks are working hard to create a coordinated specialized services system for people with a dual diagnosis.

Since 2006, three case managers at each network have been working with health, justice and corrections professionals to keep people with a mental illness out of the criminal justice system. These 12 case managers make sure that people with a dual diagnosis — that is, a developmental disability and mental illness — receive the right community supports at the right time.

So far, networks have done an inventory of all crisis and court support services across the province. They've connected with local crisis networks and Assertive Community Treatment Teams to increase the range and availability of specialized supports. Community health agencies also sit on all of their committees.

On the policy front, the Ministries of Health and Long-term Care and Community and Social Services are working together to update the policy guideline for people with a dual diagnosis. This guideline hasn't been updated since 1997. Read the sidebar to learn more about our policy work.

Delivering Services and Boosting Capacity

Good service delivery is essential to an accessible and fair specialized service system. Since forming, Community Networks of Specialized Care have developed processes to assess people and provide services faster and more effectively. Networks also have a common website — www.community-networks.ca — which features a training library to share information about building capacity.

Networks have achieved agreements between specialized service professionals from the Ministry of Community and Social Services and clinical partners from the Ministry of Health. The direct contact between the two ministries is boosting confidence and improving service.

Housing Boost

Between 2005 and 2007, the Ministry of Community and Social Services invested in 90 specialized living spaces for adults with a dual diagnosis. These spaces are linked to the networks, and they include transitional living spaces to house people in crisis situations and permanent spaces.

In 2006, people with a dual diagnosis got access to 100 supportive housing units located across Ontario. The Ministry of Health allocated 100 of its 700 supportive housing units to the Ministry of Community and Social Services for specialized services. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's affordable housing program funded these units.

Education and Training

To develop top-notch specialized service professionals and deliver the highest quality of care, networks are committed to education and training.

To increase education and research, networks are partnering with academic health sciences centres, including the Northern School of Medicine. Clinical health and specialized service professionals will benefit from the advanced training that academic centres provide.

The networks are also actively sponsoring training opportunities. Recently, they sponsored three workshops on dual diagnosis. And the Northern network is piloting an e-learning program that teaches professionals about Ontario's dual diagnosis textbook.

Joint Policy Guideline for the Provision of Community Mental Health and Developmental Services for Adults with a Dual Diagnosis

- This updated guideline will set out how services and supports for people with a dual diagnosis will be designed and delivered. It plans to integrate and coordinate services across ministries and will likely be released in fall 2008.
- Local Health Integration Networks and Community Networks of Specialized Care, with help from ministry regional offices, will implement the guideline. Regional offices will then distribute the guideline to developmental service agencies.
- Once implemented, the new guideline will help:

  Coordinate services from both sectors so that they meet the complex needs of people with a dual diagnosis

  Mental health, developmental services and children's services work together to plan community supports for transition-aged youth

  Communities get the tools they need to resolve cases.

Ontario's New Developmental Services Worker Apprenticeship Program

A developmental services career is challenging — and rewarding. It takes a special kind of person to do this job and a special set of skills.

It's not surprising that one of the biggest challenges facing the developmental services sector is hiring and keeping qualified developmental service workers.

To help recruit more developmental service workers and keep them in their important jobs, the government has launched an exciting new opportunity: the Developmental Services Worker (DSW) Apprenticeship Program. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, in partnership with the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Provincial Network on Developmental Disabilities, support this apprenticeship opportunity.

What is a developmental services worker?

A developmental services worker helps people with a developmental disability participate in community life.

To do this, they:

- Encourage skill development;
- Build connections between individuals, families and community partners; and
- Advocate for people with a developmental disability to be fully included in society.

What is the Developmental Services Worker Apprenticeship Program?

The DSW Apprenticeship Program is a unique opportunity to get paid while training for a rewarding career. It's for:

- People already working in the developmental services field;
- Students considering an apprenticeship; and
- People looking for a career change.

About 90 per cent of the apprenticeship training happens on the job. The rest of the training happens in the classroom at a local community college or an approved training organization.

People who complete their training can receive a Certificate of Apprenticeship. The apprenticeship can also lead to a DSW Diploma if it's combined with general college education credits. Each college determines the credits required for a diploma.

What are the advantages of the Apprenticeship Program?

Apprentices have the opportunity to make a difference — to people with a developmental disability and to the whole community.

Developmental service agencies can provide their staff with advanced training while keeping them on the job.

Agencies also benefit from:

- Training employees to provincial DSW standards
- Giving staff the opportunity to get a college diploma at a reduced cost
- Helping to professionalize the developmental services sector
- Better recruitment and retention of staff
- Working with the local college to tailor instruction to the community's needs.

How are apprentices sponsored?

A developmental service agency in Ontario must sponsor the apprenticeship training. When someone is interested in becoming an apprentice, the agency must contact Employment Ontario to register him or her in an apprenticeship training agreement.

Agencies provide about two years of on-the-job training. Plus, apprentices receive 780 hours of classroom instruction at a college.

Register now!

To learn how you can become a sponsor for the DSW Apprenticeship Program — or for more information on how to register as an apprentice:

1. Visit the website at **www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/apprentices**

Or

2. Call the Employment Ontario Hotline at **1-800-387-5656** or **416-325-4084 (TTY).**

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You Asked Us: Networks of Specialized Care

Question:

Agencies have long waiting lists. How will networks deal with referrals?

Answer:

Networks are connected to all the agencies and professionals that people with a dual diagnosis need, so they can locate alternative services quickly. As well, because agencies are now part of a linked system, they can offer people a broader range of services.

Remember that networks do not provide direct care to individuals. They act as a link between agencies, professionals and people with a dual diagnosis. Community planning tables prioritize people on waiting lists according to their need.

Question:

Do the networks provide crisis response services?

Answer:

No, the networks do not provide direct services. But they do improve crisis response services across the province by linking agencies and professionals. Networks are also connected to local crisis networks and have partnered with the Assertive Community Treatment Teams to make sure all specialized and crisis supports are available.

Networks help bring together all developmental service agencies in Ontario, so that they are easily accessible for people with a dual diagnosis.

Question:

What do case managers do in the networks?

Answer:

Case managers work with health, justice and corrections professionals to make sure people with a dual diagnosis are kept out of the criminal justice system. They develop plans that outline the needs of people who have been brought before the police, court or corrections system. They can also speed up referrals to developmental and mental health services in the network.

Question:

How much money is invested in the networks and how have they improved specialized services?

Answer:

We invest $3 million in the four networks each year. We also provide $3 million annually to 74 videoconferencing sites across the province. This investment helps networks coordinate the specialized service system, expand the range and availability of specialized supports, and increase education and training.

Some of the networks' accomplishments include:

- Establishing www.community-networks.ca to make training libraries and educational forums readily available;
- Creating 90 specialized living spaces for adults with a dual diagnosis who have always lived in the community;
- Sponsoring three workshops on dual diagnosis; and
- Starting an e-learning program to reach agencies in northern Ontario.